

**GRAHAM FIRE & RESCUE
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
September 9, 2020 (Virtual)**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Portmann called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL BY CHAIR

Present: Chairman Ryan Portmann, Commissioner Gerald W. Gustafson, Commissioner Adam G. Rosenlund, Commissioner Gina Blanchard-Reed, Commissioner Robert Homan, Fire Chief Pat Dale, Deputy Chief Oscar Espinosa, District Secretary Brenda Barker and Board Secretary Jodi Reynolds

Absent: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed moved to approve the Agenda as written. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PRESENTATIONS

- Deputy Fred Wiggins, Pierce County Sheriff's Department
Chief Dale stated that due to the recipient not being in attendance, he recommends postponing the presentation of the award. Chairman Portmann concurred.

- Commander Todd Rossi, Tukwila Police Department
With Commander Rossi in attendance, Chief Dale proceeded with the presentation. He provided details of the heroics Commander Rossi demonstrated on August 29, 2020, when he rescued an 11-year-old girl from a vehicle engulfed in flames. Chief Dale then presented him with a Special Recognition Award for his life-saving efforts. Commander Rossi expressed his thanks and stated it was fortunate he and his wife were there at that time. He also acknowledged the actions of Deputy Wiggins, stating it was a team effort.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Regular Board Meeting Minutes of August 26, 2020

Financial Documentation:

General Fund:

Payables: Checks #28673 through #28710 and #28721 through #28730 =	\$182,236.25
Transfer (EFT) =	<u>\$90.54</u>
TOTAL:	<u>\$182,326.79</u>

Commissioner Homan moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as submitted. Commissioner Gustafson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Fire Chief's Report

Fire Chief Dale welcomed the Board and public to the virtual meeting and reported on the following:

He referenced the COVID-19 Strategic Priorities and stated we are still very much immersed in these.

Current Events

- **Benefit Charge:** He will be presenting to the Graham Business Association on September 16 with Commissioner Homan, and to the Fredrickson-Kapowsin Rotary on September 17. Staff is scheduling a number of HOAs, community groups and others.
- **COVID Testing Site:** On August 27th Station 93 hosted the Pierce County Department of Emergency Management's mobile COVID Testing Site. Approximately 77 cars passed through.
- **Tender Update:** The Tender is now in Hillsboro, Oregon. Mechanic Brian Fortner will be inspecting it, and we should have it first of October.
- **The Power of Social Media:** He provided analytics resulting from a photo posted by Firefighter Stenstrom from the scene of a serious motor vehicle accident. Several news media outlets also picked up the story.

244th Command Fire: He stated this is the most significant event Graham Fire & Rescue has hosted in its history. He provided a recap of the event and the response efforts, with the aid of some images of the event, as follows:

- At approximately 10:00 p.m. on Labor Day, we responded to a brush fire that ultimately engulfed and destroyed five primary residences, ten outbuildings and numerous vehicles, spreading to 275 acres.
- We quickly called for mutual aid which included multiple alarms, strike teams and task forces. Chief Dale, with the consult of Chairman Portmann, requested State Mobilization, which was approved, providing additional resources. A southwest Washington Incident Management Team arrived the next day. A total of approximately 65 single resources, comprised of engines, medic units and brush rigs, assembled on scene that night.
- Several mass media outlets and elected officials have visited the site and spoken with responders. He has witnessed an outpouring of kindness and generosity from the community to help the displaced residents and to thank our Firefighters.
- The Incident Management Team is still in place. The Level 3 evacuation order has been lifted, and is currently at Level 2. The Pierce County Sherriff's Department was instrumental in partnering with us to carry out the evacuation order and the eventual return of residents to their homes.
- In addition to the fire response agencies, the Pierce County Department of Emergency Management's Incident Management Team including Chairman Portmann, the Red Cross, and members of our community, all were involved in a significant way.
- A few companies remain on the scene for fire control and removal of damaged trees. The Incident Management Team is estimated to remain in place until Saturday.
- As a result of receiving authorization for State Mobilization, staff is now in the process of documenting our costs, and we will be largely reimbursed for this fire.

- He concluded by stating there was no loss of life, and no injuries to residents, citizens or Firefighters.

Chairman Portmann stated he witnessed firsthand the good work Chief Dale and the leadership team and Firefighters were doing.

Standing Committees

Budget, Finance and Audit – No report

Policy and Procedure – No report

Mergers/Consolidations – No report

Joint Labor/Management – No report

Strategic Leadership Plan – No report

Legislative Affairs – No report

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2021 Budget – Board Budget Goals

Chairman Portmann reminded the Board the goals suggested by staff at the last meeting and requested affirmation of those goals. Discussion ensued. Chairman Portmann stated to staff that the goals are affirmed by the Board, and they may proceed with the budget process.

NEW BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Citizen Steve Kelley stated he had questions for the Board and inquired if he would receive answers immediately. Chairman Portmann responded he would do his best to provide answers, but depending on the scope of the questions, research may be required by staff, who would get back to him at a later time. Mr. Kelley asked the following questions:

1. Does the fire ban include all fires? Chairman Portmann responded there is a county-wide burn ban in effect. Mr. Kelley asked if that information is on the Department's website. Chairman Portmann responded affirmatively. Mr. Kelley asked when the burn ban went into effect. Chairman Portmann responded he was not certain. Mr. Kelley expressed concern over the Department's response to a burn complaint he made on Saturday. Chairman Portmann advised he would direct staff to research that call and our response, and contact him with their findings.
2. He has called the Fire Department several times recently and does not feel he should have to wait 24 hours to get a call back. Why is there no direct phone contact with the Fire Department during the day? Chairman Portmann responded he is not informed on the current process and would ask staff to reply to the Board and him.
3. How does the evacuation process work? Chairman Portmann deferred to Chief Dale to respond. He explained a combination of methods were employed on the recent fire including Fire and Sherriff's Department personnel in SUVs going up to each residence over loudspeakers announcing the Level 3 evacuation and to leave their homes immediately. We also reached out early on social media. In a high risk environment, we utilized primarily personal contact.
4. Does Graham Fire & Rescue have a wildfire plan? Chief Dale responded we have plans, policies and procedures for response, deployment, protection of employees, and processes allowing for escalation of incidents, in numerous forms.

5. As a homeowner, what can he do to protect his property? Chief Dale explained the concept of development of defensible space, which includes keeping debris, including grass, trees, shrubs, fences, etc. about 50 feet away from your home.

Mr. Kelley thanked Chief Dale for his answers to his questions and will wait to hear back from Deputy Chief Espinosa on his fire ban concerns.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Blanchard-Reed commented her “profound thankfulness” for the response effort and groundwork laid for such strong mutual aid. Additionally, she commented she received a \$100 check from a constituent as a donation to Graham Fire & Rescue that she will forward to staff.

Commissioner Homan expressed his thanks to the management team for the outstanding job done and their effective action plan, and to the Firefighters for completing that plan. The entire response shows they were prepared to call in the proper resources to get ahead of it. Outstanding work was done by all. He also thanked the management team for keeping the Commissioners informed.

Commissioner Gustafson commented on the urgency to get the new Tender in service.

Commissioner Rosenlund commented based on his understanding of fire behavior, this was an amazing stop. The early work done by Firefighters had significant impact and saved several homes. He expressed his gratitude to the Department.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Due to technical issues he was experiencing, Chairman Portmann requested District Secretary Barker read the RCW citation into the record. She announced a 15-minute Executive Session under RCW 42.30.140 (4) (b) to plan or adopt strategy/position for collective bargaining, with no business to follow.

The Executive Session was announced as starting at 7:20 p.m.

At 7:35, the Executive Session was extended 15 minutes.

The Executive Session was announced as ending at 7:50 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, the Regular Board Meeting of September 9, 2020, was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Ryan Portmann, Board Chairman

Brenda L.B. Barker, District Secretary